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10 Crucial Steps in the eLearning Development Process

By **Vyond Team** *on* January 13, 2020

The eLearning industry is growing at an incredible pace. Between 2015 and 2025 eLearning could grow 300%, meaning more and more companies will be investing in eLearning, and others will be expecting it to be offered.

With this high demand, learning professionals must know how to efficiently create high-quality online modules and courses. To do so, there needs to be a clear, repeatable eLearning development process. If you have a concrete set of steps to follow, you're always going to have a map for your creation process and be able to maintain your module output without sacrificing quality.

The following steps will guide you through the entire module development process. They'll push you to think deeply about the goals you're hoping to achieve, the audience you're targeting, and the ways you're going to promote the eLearning module when it's done. Essentially, these steps will guide you through the entire development process, from beginning to end and beyond.

How do you develop eLearning modules?

An eLearning module is a short lesson, generally 10-15 minutes long, that often includes text, quizzes, video, or interactive games. While eLearning modules can be part of a larger series or course, they can also be stand-alone lessons.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center has created a series of modules that serve as great examples of what modules are capable of.

A key part of creating modules is remembering that they're bite-sized. We've broken down 10 steps to help you develop modules that convey information in a powerful, memorable way in a short time.

1. Create clear goals.

The last thing you want to do is be midway through creating a module and realize it isn't delivering a cohesive message. Stay on track with your module creation by setting clear goals that align with your overall course goals.

To identify the objective of the module, consider the larger goal of the course that includes it. From there, identify a module goal that contributes to the larger purpose of the course.

For example, you could have the goal of teaching an audience how to become successful breadmakers. You could then have a module on making dough, another on how to score bread, and another on how to bake bread in a gas oven. Each module has its own objectives, but they're all moving the learner toward the ultimate goal of becoming a proficient breadmaker.

For more information on setting learning goals, learnWorlds has an informative piece on setting goals.

2. Identify knowledge gaps.

Before you get into the actual module creation process, it's important to understand what kind of knowledge gaps your audience has and how you can fill them in with your content. This information will guide the content of your modules, so take care of it as early as possible.

To figure out where the knowledge gaps are, you need to do a deep dive on your audience. Go to the places your audience congregates: forums, blogs, social media pages, etc. Note questions that are regularly asked about the topic you are teaching, and plan to answer them in your module.

If you're creating an internal module for employee training, consider giving team members a survey to identify gaps in the skill you're teaching. You can also talk to managers about where performance seems to be lacking within their teams to identify areas of improvement.

3. Set financial and time budgets.

You'll want to set budgets for both your time and your finances ahead of time. Budgets will help you stay realistic about the scope of your eLearning module while still focusing on the quality of the lesson.

To come up with a budget, think about the goal of your module and what kind of elements you think it will need. Do you think you'll need video, text, or narration? Think about the elements you foresee the module including and the time it could take to make this module happen. Then, come up with an estimated budget that you can run by your boss.

Be realistic about your budget for both time and money. It's better to give yourself less leeway than you actually have to ensure that you're able to fully create your module, as opposed to running out in the middle of development.

For even more information on developing an eLearning budget, read this helpful guide from the eLearning Industry.

4. Decide on a content format.

You know your audience and what their knowledge gaps are. Now, it's time to determine how you can best fill those knowledge gaps using eLearning modules.
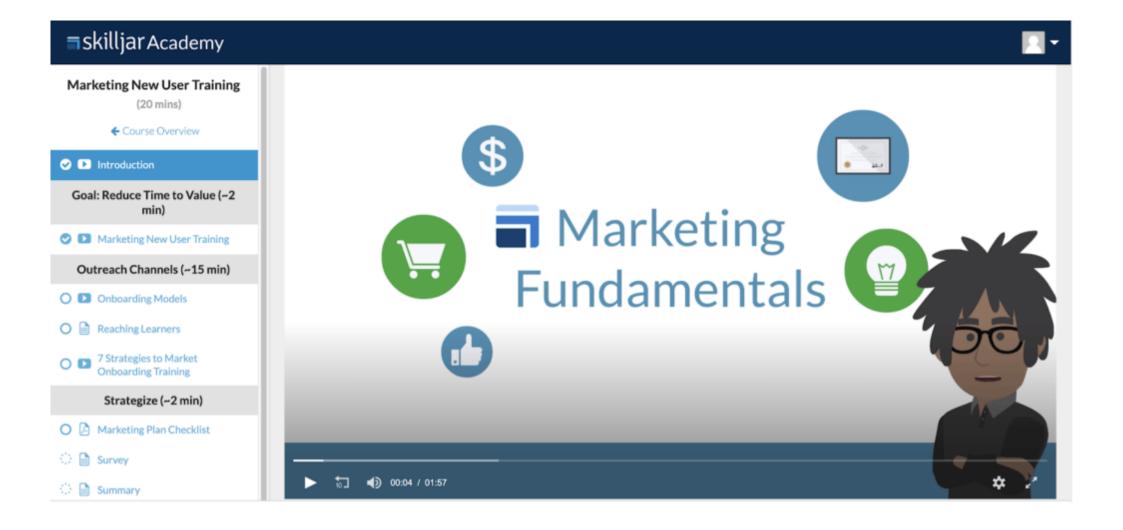
Your audience is likely experiencing a pain point or struggle related to the knowledge gap or gaps they have. The content you create for your eLearning modules will need to be the right fit for the type of knowledge your audience is seeking.

For example, if you have an abstract concept like dealing with anxiety, using a video that runs through a real-life scenario can be great for illustrating how to handle this problem.

On the other hand, if you have a more concrete concept skill to teach, like a formula or a programming language, a quiz that puts the user's knowledge to the test can be an effective way to help the information stick.

A big selling point of modules is that they can utilize virtually any content format you want. This means you can teach a larger lesson through a mixture of videos, slides, interactive quizzes, and beyond. For a great example of this, see this skilljar Academy course, which contains a number of modules using video created with Vyond.

5. Pick a video creation platform.

If you plan on having a video in your module, and any future modules, you'll need a flexible and affordable video creation platform. With your budget in hand, look for a video creation platform that fits your needs, but also lends itself to module development.

Find a video creation platform that's flexible and capable of being customized to fit numerous subjects and audiences. Flexibility means looking for a platform with a high degree of customization, such as a wide variety of color options for modules and videos, a library of graphics and characters, and the ability to use custom icons.

You'll also want a platform that is affordable. Full courses can require numerous modules, so any software that caps the number of videos you can create will be costly. Instead, find a tool with a flat monthly rate that lets you create videos as often as you like.

There are a number of video creation platforms available, many of them offering something different. Look at this list from Capterra to see which one fits your needs the best.

6. Keep things digestible with microlearning.

An eLearning module is meant to be quick and easily digestible. Even so, it's still possible to overload your users with too much information within these short lessons.

To avoid cognitive overload, draw inspiration from the microlearning model of lesson creation. Microlearning is all about making small lessons that are:

- **Applicable**: Make the lessons within your modules easy to grasp and applicable for a large audience.
- **Sticky**: Ensure the information or lesson is sticky, and stays with learners. Short, fun videos are a great way to do this.
- **Accessible**: Make sure modules are widely accessible on many devices and available when users want them.
- **Cumulative**: Similar to the point about goals and objectives, your modules should be cumulative, building off of other knowledge to work toward a larger understanding.

Check out our full guide on microlearning is available here to learn additional tips on how you can avoid cognitive overload and ensure your modules are memorable.

7. Create a storyboard and script.

If you're creating a video for your module, plan it out by creating a script and storyboard. A storyboard can act as a high-level guide for your video and help you spot any problem spots before animating or filming, while a script will keep the language concise and ensure it's on-target with your audience.

When you're creating a script, make sure the entire script is based on a singular objective. This objective should be the same or closely-related to the one chosen for your module. Consider what kind of narrative you can frame around that objective and how you can tell a story that's engaging and educational. Then, start writing! For an even deeper dive on script writing for modules and microlearning, be sure to read our full guide.

You'll also want a storyboard for your video. A storyboard will outline each scene of the video, with brief descriptors about the points being covered in that scene. You'll also want to point out any dialogue and action, like two characters interacting or moving about. You don't have to be an artist for this process, as the storyboard isn't meant to be a work of art, merely a guide for the video creation process. Be sure to read our fleshed out guide on the storyboarding process for videos.

A script and storyboard are two integral parts of the video creation process. While they may feel like extra work at first, you'll quickly find they help you avoid any costly mistakes during the actual production of the video or animation.

8. Review and implement feedback.

Once you've created your module, ask for feedback from co-workers—department heads, members of the HR team, or learning specialists—to find areas of improvement.

To keep input constructive and easy to digest, create a feedback form. Draft questions that help you gauge whether the module meets its learning objective, such as:

- What skills or information did you learn by the end of the module?
- Were any sections unclear? Why?
- What questions did you have at the end of the module?

These kinds of questions will keep the feedback relevant and useful, allowing you to easily implement it to improve your module.

9. Promote your module.

Once your module has been tested and launched, it's ready to be promoted.

If your module is internal at your company, you can promote via email, company chat channels, through HR, and at company meetings, for example. Remember that most learners will need to hear about the module more than once before completing your course.

For external eLearning modules, use your audience research from earlier steps to inform your marketing when using the following tactics to help your module find eager learners:

- **Paid search ad campaigns,** such as a pay-per-click (PPC) campaign on Google, is a reliable way to boost awareness of your modules.
- Create **content marketing**, such as blog posts or videos, to introduce your audience to the topic of your module. At the end of the content, you can encourage viewers to complete the module to learn more.
- Use **social media marketing** to promote your modules, both organically and through paid posts. You can also post your modules in relevant groups within social media.

If you're creating modules for employees, you'll want to avoid the paid routes and instead promote them through internal communication channels.

Promotions can help your hard work pay off in the way of more viewers, more feedback, and even better courses down the road as a result.

10. Track the performance of your module

You worked hard to get this far and create a module. Tracking the lesson's performance ensures that hard work pays off in the future when you develop other modules.

First off, if you're not using a learning management system (LMS), you'll need to implement one to get the most accurate performance tracking.

Next, track the performance of your courses and modules. Most LMS platforms will have an analytics dashboard that allows you to look at performance, while some will email you reports on course performance. Talk to your IT team or contact support for the LMS you choose to make sure this is set up right out of the gate.

There are many metrics you can track, but the most important are:

- **Completion rate**: You need to know if people are completing your modules and courses. The average completion rate of a large online eLearning courses is only 10%, so anything better than that is progress. If you're making courses for employee use, the completion rate should be much higher, especially if it's required. For more information on how to drive course completion rate, read efront's in-depth guide.
- **Proficiency**: An eLearning course is only effective if users are learning something, which is where proficiency comes in. Look at the scores for any tests or games in your courses and see if users are generally passing or failing.
- **Course ratings**: Users should have the ability to rate courses and leave feedback. Take this feedback seriously, as your course can only succeed if people are learning from it and enjoying their experience. Most LMS platforms should give users the ability to rate courses or answer surveys based on courses, so take advantage of this.

You put a lot of work into the modules you develop. Tracking their performance helps ensure that hard work isn't wasted on courses that aren't benefiting users and allowing people to learn the valuable skills you're wanting to teach.
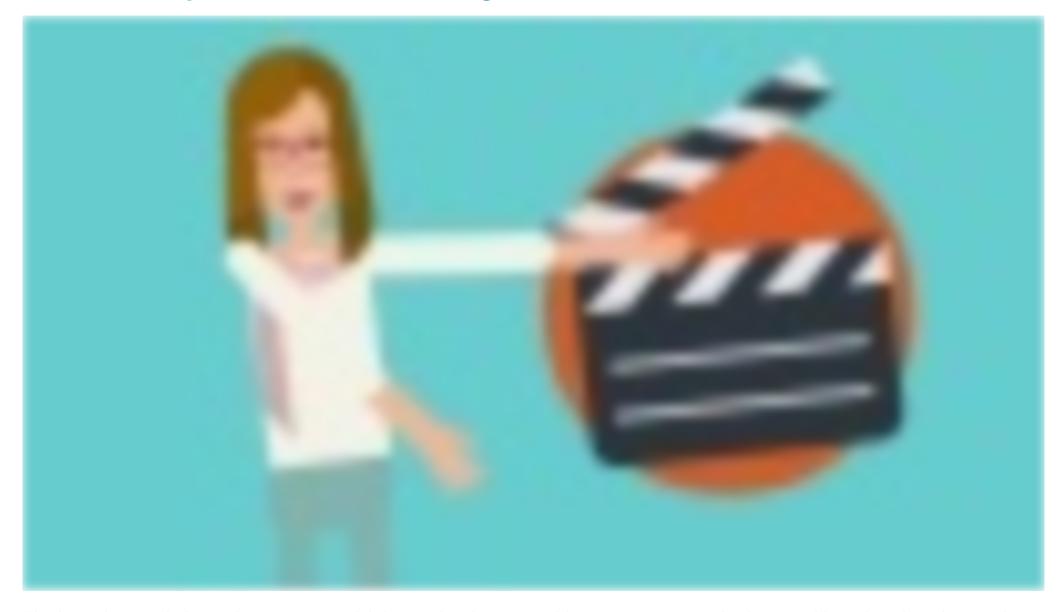
How long does it take to create eLearning courses?

You know what goes into the module development process, but how long does this process take? It varies from module to module, but as a benchmark, some eLearning developers estimate it can take as much as 184 hours of development for every hour of eLearning course. An eLearning module is typically 10-15 minutes long, so it would take roughly 46 hours for a 15-minute module according to this research.

To reduce the time needed to create a course, take advantage of tools that can speed up content creation. For example, Vyond can reduce the time and money needed to create videos for modules with drag-and-drop templates. If multiple team members are writing text for the module, use Google Docs to collaborate from any location.

The development time for courses and modules can vary greatly depending on the content, the team involved, and the tools being used. Plan ahead and think about the requirements of your module, and you can come up with an estimate that helps you get things done in a timely manner.

How Can Vyond Make eLearning Effective?

Thinking about including videos in your module? Vyond makes it possible to create animated videos quickly and easily with a number of features.

- Vyond uses a drag and drop process that makes it possible to create videos and scenes in minutes without any design or production experience.

- Customizable characters allow you to quickly make modules that fit virtually any audience or subject.

- Vyond's affordable monthly cost supports the creation of any number of videos, meaning you can create as many modules as you want.

- Integration with Articulate Storyline opens the door to interactive, branching storylines. This can make eLearning engaging, interactive, and fun for your learners.

The eLearning development process is long and involved. With Vyond, you can take solace in knowing your video and animation creation processes will be streamlined and simple.

Boost module production with our eLearning development process

The demand for eLearning content is growing and growing. You're going to need a process that allows you to meet that demand by creating numerous educational modules. By following the straightforward process outlined in this piece, you can have a smooth production process that's consistent and doesn't compromise on quality. As time goes on, this process will become second nature and you'll only get faster.

Most importantly, you'll realize that all of your hard work was worth it when you see that you have fostered a group of engaged learners that come to you for knowledge, time and again.

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